

**Minutes  
Business Advisory Committee**

**May 10th, 2012**

**Newton City Hall**

The Business Advisory Committee met at 11:30 a.m. on May 10th, 2012 for a lunch meeting in the Council Chambers at Newton City Hall. Chairman John Stiver welcomed guest speaker Mandy Pitts, City of Hickory Communications Director and Brand Manager.

**Members**

**Present:** Jerry Hodge  
Jeremy Petty  
Tom Warlick  
John Stiver

**Members**

**Absent:** Luke Walling  
Judy Smith  
Eddie Haupt  
Neal Powell  
Javier Chavez

**Others Present:** Mayor Anne Stedman  
Mandy Pitts, City of Hickory Communications Director

**Staff Present:** City Manager Todd Clark, Rob Powell, Commercial Development Coordinator  
Chris Bartleson, Planning Director, Gary Herman, Public Information Officer

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**Item 1: Hickory Brandprint Presentation**

**Chairman John Stiver** opened the meeting and turned the meeting over to Mandy Pitts, who spoke about the Hickory Brandprint Report and how it might be utilized by other area municipalities and specifically Newton. Ms. Pitts explained that the data within the report was regional data, extending beyond the city limits of Hickory, and would be useful for all area communities. Ms. Pitts says that the City of Hickory visualizes a regional marketing effort that would benefit the entire county and the entire Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area. The City of Newton is invited to use the report and to consider using the brand logo developed as a part of this study and adopted by Catawba County. Ms. Pitts explained that the “swoosh” logo is meant to represent the mountain skyline or the flowing Catawba River. The tagline “Life Well Crafted” emphasizes the history of the area in crafting goods such as furniture, gloves and textiles. “Crafting” can be extended to life events such as crafting families, civic groups, leaders, etc. for marketing the area’s good quality of life. Ms. Pitts also stated that Hickory views branding as a long-term process and that even the roll-out of the new logo would be gradual.

The Committee discussed the branding process with Ms. Pitts along with the other interests of the Committee. There was an interest in regional marketing, with Chairman Stiver stating that if we all work together to sell the area, good things will filter down to the county and to all the municipalities to the benefit of all. It was stated that we need to use branding to bring in more jobs and attractions to keep our young people from leaving the area. Newton needs to market the town’s heritage, such as Soldier’s Reunion and the associated community events. Mr. Hodge suggested that regional marketing could be promoted by area businesses, such as trucking companies who could help by displaying the “brand” on their trucks. Another interest expressed by Mr. Hodge and Mr. Petty was existing business retention.

There was a discussion about the effectiveness of web sites and printed materials for marketing. Ms. Pitts stated that an impressive web presence was absolutely necessary. The “Start Something Here” web site was discussed along with its purpose. Mr. Warlick asked how someone would know to go to that web site for information about the area. Ms. Pitts stated that searches by web users would turn up the web site when relevant words were used in the searches, and that the web site would hopefully cause the searcher to check into other web sites in the area. “Start Something Here” was intended to serve as a portal to other websites such as the various city web sites or the EDC web site.

## **Item 2: Minutes and Committee Business**

**Chairman Stiver** opened the business portion of the meeting. The minutes of the April meeting were approved after a motion by Mr. Hodge, seconded by Mr. Petty.

**Rob Powell** provided comments about recent Newton real estate news, including the bakery planned for Anne Wepner’s building on the east side of the square. John Stiver mentioned that Mrs. Wepner was working on up-fit plans for the bakery and was also checking into building code issues relative to using the upper floor of the building. Rob Powell also noted that the building beside the downtown fire station was now vacant since the Salvation Army Store moved to Conover.

There was a discussion about the recent low attendance at the mid-day Committee meeting time. Several members have had difficulties leaving their businesses during the lunch hour. Those in attendance approved a change to 3:00 pm for future meetings. The Committee recognized that Judy Smith would not be able to participate on the Committee due to personal reasons and that Luke Walling’s travel schedule was preventing his participation. Those in attendance requested that Mayor Stedman make a recommendation to Council to appoint two new members for the Committee.

## **Item 3: Newton Branding Discussion**

**Chairman Stiver** requested comments and discussion from the Committee members on branding and marketing and the Hickory Brandprint study. Mr. Hodge spoke in favor of participating in regional marketing and the need to market Newton in general. Mr. Warlick stated that the Brandprint logo was attractive but not really attention-grabbing and that the Newton heart is memorable and attracts the viewer’s attention. The collective opinion was to participate in regional branding, possibly to utilize the “swoosh” somehow in our branding materials, and to keep the heart and the “Heart of Catawba County”, especially for the more local marketing and community identity. Mr. Petty reminded the Committee that standard printer’s colors would permit more economical printed materials than special shades, and suggested that we check the color selections in the Hickory Brandprint study.

**Item 4: Business Tool Kit**

**Rob Powell** briefly listed some of the resources already available for assisting small businesses such as the North Carolina Capital Access Program, the CVCC Small Business Center, and the NC Business Link web site.

**Item 5: Adjournment**

**City Manager Todd Clark** informed the Committee that the 2012-2013 budget proposal would include a code enforcement officer for 9 months of the first year.

With no further business, Chairman Stiver adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m. and noted the next meeting would be a 3:00 pm on Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Powell  
Recording Secretary